

ENACT Partnership Secretariat

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Introduction

These key messages have been prepared by the ENACT Partnership Secretariat to support partners and stakeholders to advance nature-based solutions (NbS) for climate change and biodiversity in UNCCD COP17 discussions and outcomes.

Building on ENACT Partnership reports and the outcomes of key high-level events and technical dialogues, these messages are intended to support strengthened collective engagement on critical topics related to NbS during UNCCD COP17.



UNCCD COP17 Background

Convening under the maxim of “Restoring Land. Restoring Hope”, UNCCD COP17 will assemble delegates from the Convention's 197 Parties, alongside observer organizations, including intergovernmental bodies, civil society, scientists, Indigenous Peoples and business entities. Today, with up to 40% of the world's land degraded^[1], the case for land restoration is incontrovertible. This is especially stark in the COP17 host country, Mongolia, where 77% of land is already degraded^[2].

Land degradation is also inextricably linked to biodiversity loss and climate change^[3]. Healthy land can store carbon, retain water, support biodiversity, and sustain rural livelihoods simultaneously. By contrast, degraded land loses soil, reduces productivity, weakens ecosystem functions, and increases susceptibility to drought. These are not separate outcomes, but interrelated consequences of the same landscape - both impacted by climate change and contributing to it^[4]. According to the 2019 IPBES assessment report on Land Degradation and Restoration, every US\$1 invested in restoring degraded land generates an estimated US\$7–US\$30 in economic benefits through enhanced ecosystem services, including improved food production, carbon sequestration and water quality. Furthermore, good stewardship of land is essential to adapt to climate change. Sustainable land management, for example, helps to increase the resilience of ecosystems and the people who depend on them^[5]. The IPCC states that land-based mitigation measures are among the most effective and readily available options for achieving global climate goals, with the Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector capable of delivering an estimated 20–30% of the mitigation

^[1] <https://www.unccd.int/resources/global-land-outlook/global-land-outlook-2nd-edition>

^[2] <https://reliefweb.int/report/mongolia/impacts-changing-climate-mongolias-nomadic-herder>

^[3] <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2024-12/LDN%20climate%20synergies.pdf>

^[4] <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>

^[5] <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2024-12/LDN%20climate%20synergies.pdf>

required by 2050 to stay within the 1.5°C–2°C long-term temperature goal under the Paris Agreement, particularly through NbS encompassing the management, conservation, and restoration of land^[6].

Under the formal negotiations, one of the key areas in which NbS will be discussed at COP17 is international cooperation (COP agenda item 4), which seeks to promote and strengthen relationships with other relevant conventions and international organisations, institutions and agencies for joint target achievement across the conventions, including achieving land degradation neutrality by 2030 (Decision 8/COP.15).

Beyond the formal negotiations, the COP will also engender whole-of-society action across the land agenda through the Riyadh–Ulaanbaatar Action Agenda. The Action Agenda translates COP commitments into initiatives and partnerships aligned with key land priorities. Constructed to connect political decisions with real-world solutions, this cooperative global framework engages state and non-state actors and calls on leaders from all sectors to accelerate solutions for resilient economies and societies. The Action Agenda will feature a series of thematic days dedicated to key priorities on the global land and drought agenda — covering NbS, climate-resilient food systems, and financing for drought-resilient landscapes. Concerning the latter, a Ministerial Dialogue on innovative financial mechanisms will take place, providing a strong platform for incorporating key messages resulting from the recent ENACT Dialogue on innovative financing for NbS.

Notably, the Agenda will also include the launch of the Nature-based Solutions for Sustainable Infrastructure Initiative (NbS4SII), a global initiative launched under Mongolia’s leadership at UNCCD COP17 as part of the Action Agenda. The initiative will advance the mainstreaming of NbS into development policies, infrastructure planning processes, investment frameworks, and implementation mechanisms, thereby strengthening synergies across the land–water–climate–biodiversity nexus.

ENACT will work alongside Mongolia to promote NbS across the UNCCD COP17 agenda. ENACT-hosted engagements include an official side event on Transformation for Land, Climate and Biodiversity Resilience through Nature-based Solutions, co-convened with the UNCCD COP17 Presidency. Additionally, ENACT will co-convene the Ulaanbaatar Technical Dialogue alongside the Türkiye COP31 Presidency and the G20 Land Initiative, bringing together partners and stakeholders working on integrated approaches to climate, land and biodiversity. Building directly on the outcomes of the Antalya Dialogue on Rio Synergies in May this year, the Technical Dialogue will focus on the theme “Land as the Common Ground”.

^[6] <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/chapter/chapter-7/>



ENACT key messages as per UNCCD COP17 programme

Specific focus on discussions of particular relevance to NbS:

Promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies (COP item 4)

- Land Degradation Neutrality provides an operational entry point for aligning land, climate, and biodiversity objectives, given that land is a clear point of convergence across these agendas. However, despite this cross-convention relevance, land remains the least prominently reflected linkage in national policies related to the Rio Conventions^[7].
- NbS adhering to the internationally adopted UNEA 5/5 definition^[8] provide a common implementation framework for national integration and delivery of LDN whilst concurrently addressing biodiversity loss and climate change.
- NbS are increasingly referenced in national policy documentation under the Rio Conventions, yet commitments are often not anchored in law, targets, and finance. As such, the highest-leverage support is not further awareness-raising but assistance in converting existing NbS pledges into binding, financed and monitored obligations^[9].
- Synergies financing must not come at the expense of reduced land finance. Financing for land should remain distinct and protected, with NbS finance complementing, not replacing, direct support for land and drought resilience, and fully respecting existing commitments under the Rio Conventions.
- Policy pledges and institutional coordination across the Rio Conventions should be operationalised through national implementation mechanisms to deliver measurable on-ground outcomes. This includes embedding integrated approaches, including NbS, into national plans, harmonised reporting, and coordinated delivery across domestic processes under the UNCCD, CBD, and UNFCCC.

^[7] ENACT 2026 State of NbS Report (pre-launch unedited publication version)

^[8] <https://www.unep.org/resources/resolutions-treaties-and-decisions/UN-Environment-Assembly-5-2>

^[9] ENACT 2026 State of NbS Report (pre-launch unedited publication version)

Finance Day: Ministerial dialogue on innovative financial mechanisms for healthy land and drought resilience (Action Agenda)

- Land degradation, climate and biodiversity goals can only be reached if investments into NbS increase 2.5 times to USD 571 billion per year by 2030, more than double the current USD 220 billion/year. Against this backdrop, innovative financing for NbS is crucial to bridge the investment gap, with private sector NbS financing currently amounting to only USD 23 billion^[9].
- A key challenge is scaling bankable land-based NbS, not proving the concept. The priority is to convert NbS pilots into investable, landscape-level land restoration projects that are de-risked and well structured enough to attract public and private capital and transform land opportunities into finance-ready assets.
- Fragmented national policy environments detract investment in land restoration. Coherent integration of NbS into LDN targets, NDCs, NBSAPs, and broader national development plans is needed to fortify investment confidence and improve domestic coordination.
- Public finance remains essential for early-stage preparation, risk sharing, and project structuring, whilst blended finance and market mechanisms can help unlock private capital for large-scale NbS, including land restoration.
- Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) requirements for NbS must be harmonised and aligned across land, climate and biodiversity agendas. Standardised MRV frameworks are needed to reduce operational burden, improve comparability across projects, and build investor confidence.
- UNCCD's Global Mechanism (GM) can help connect political commitments to practical country-led investment pipelines aligned with national priorities, including through blended finance, project preparation, and private sector engagement under the Business4Land initiative.

^[10] <https://wedocs.unep.org/items/a4a8edaa-3896-4811-b527-1583dfce7201>